



EXHIBIT 4  
DATE 3/11/09  
HB 250

The Honorable Chairman Jon Sesso  
and Members of the House Appropriations Committee  
Montana House of Representatives  
PO Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

March 11, 2009

RE: House Bill 250, Montana Comprehensive Health Association (MCHA) Revision and Appropriations

Dear Chairman Sesso and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of New West Health Services, Montana's provider-sponsored health plan caring for over 43,000 Montanans, I urge your strong support of MCHA by passing HB 250 and endorsing the \$8 million appropriation. Thank you, Representative MacLaren, for your sponsorship of the bill and strong support of the program. Thank you, also, Mr. Bykerk, and the MCHA Board and staff for their caring commitment to Montanans covered by this program.

MCHA provides vital benefits for over 3000 Montanans, either through the traditional plan or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) portability plan. Many of these individuals had significant health needs, and without this program, they would not have financial protection. In addition, the Montana medical community would face the prospect of more charity and uncompensated care.

The MCHA benefit plans are not inexpensive – Montanans covered by the plan pay premiums and participate in the cost of their health care. In addition, all fully-insured New West members directly subsidize MCHA benefits through a premium assessment, paid to the state of Montana. Last year that assessment was over \$655,000.

Montana was one of the first states in the nation to adopt a program like MCHA back in 1985. Montana was also the first state to pilot the concept of an additional subsidy for lower income citizens. I am proud of my long affiliation with this important program, from the legislation's signing ceremony to the opportunity to serve on the MCHA Board.

Please add your support by voting "yes" for HB 250.

Sincerely,

Tanya M. Ask

Vice President, External and Provider Relations

cc: Rep. MacLaren, Sponsor  
Cecil Bykerk, Board Chair